

A3 cancel

desirable to shorten the idle period to reduce the number of active flows and thus reduce the number of tags in the cache. Alternatively, the length of the tag may be adjusted in response to the idle period, such that a longer tag will serve to offset the increase in error associated with a longer idle period.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 5, and 23 to be as follows:

1. A method for switching a packet, the method comprising:
 - computing a tag for the packet;
 - looking up the tag in a table, the table comprised of entries, the entries
 - associating switching information with a tag, said switching information defining a route through a plurality of interconnected switch nodes; and
 - using switching information associated with the tag in the table to switch the packet if there is an entry for the tag in the table.

- A4*
5. A method of claim 1, wherein the entries in the table are removed if the tag corresponding to the entry has not been looked up in a predetermined period.

- A5*
23. A method comprising:
 - computing a tag for a packet;
 - looking up the tag in a table, the table comprised of entries, the entries
 - associating information about the flow with tags, the information including route information specifying a route through a plurality of interconnected switch nodes;

updating information about the flow associated with the tag if there is an entry for the tag;

creating a new entry in the table if there is no entry for the tag;

removing entries that have not been accessed for a predetermined period from the table.
